

County supervisors allocate \$1 million to ensure completion of Paul's Place

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Davis architect Maria Ogrydziak designed the first-of-its kind, vertical tiny-home village that would replace the aging and dilapidated Davis Community Meals and Housing building at 1111 H St. Courtesy rendering

Paul's Place has moved another step closer to completion by this summer.

The Yolo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday voted unanimously to allocate up to \$1 million in American Rescue Plan funds, matching a similar allocation by the Davis City Council, to close a funding gap that threatened completion of the innovative project currently under construction on H Street.

Paul's Place is a community-driven project that was initially financed by private donations and grants — including a \$2.5 million matching grant from Sutter Health. Upon completion, it will provide emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing overseen by Davis Community Meals and Housing. Ground was broken on the project over the summer and has continued apace since then, but unanticipated construction and labor costs threw a hitch in plans for completion by July.

Funds were expected to run out in the spring, prompting backers to seek \$2 million in funds from the city and county to close the gap.

In December, the Davis City Council voted unanimously to dedicate up to \$1 million in ARP funds and the Board of Supervisors followed suit this week. The board had previously approved an ARP expenditure plan that included \$7.5 million for housing and homelessness projects with funding for Paul's Place an early consideration.

Named after the father of Bill Pride, DCMH's executive director, Paul's Place is a first-of-its kind, vertical tiny-home village that will provide shelter to dozens of unhoused individuals every year along with an array of supportive services.

Once completed, the project will provide:

- * Four emergency shelter beds, staff offices, a dining and kitchen area, laundry, bathrooms and a resource center on the first floor;
- * 10 transitional single-occupant bedrooms with shared kitchen, laundry, living room, bathrooms and offices on the second floor; and
- * Nine single-occupant permanent supportive micro-units on each of the third and fourth floors (18 total micro units).

The project has been in the works for a number of years. Among those who helped make it possible were local business owners Reed and Susan Youmans, who paid for a feasibility study to see if there was sufficient community support and then led the fundraising effort; Partnership Health Plan, which provided a \$750,000 grant; nationally recognized Davis architect Maria Ogrydziak, who designed the project; hundreds of Davis residents, businesses and organizations who contributed financially; and Sutter Health, which provided the \$2.5 million matching grant.

"We worked hard over the last several years to raise funding," Pride told the City Council in December, "and then COVID hit and, of course, our costs raised considerably."

According to a report prepared for the Board of Supervisors, it wasn't just COVID that led to a funding gap.

The analysis by Kitchell, a construction consultant, said the initial construction estimate in January 2018 was flawed, leading "Paul's Place to unknowingly use an incorrect number for their construction budget, resulting in an underfunded project from the start." That said, Kitchell put the need for additional funds at about \$1.84 million. County staff have recommended that cost be split evenly between the county and the city of Davis through use of ARP funds.

With the board's allocation of funding on Tuesday, Paul's Place appears to be back on track for completion this summer.

As part of the same agenda item on Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors also approved an ARP funding allocation to serve the unhoused community in West Sacramento.

That city had requested \$2.6 million to purchase and operate a motel in West Sacramento that will extend Project Roomkey — which has provided shelter for the homeless during the pandemic — for three more years.

The city will acquire a property with about 25 rooms, make necessary site improvements, and work with the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency to secure contracts to operate what will be a temporary housing program for homeless individuals currently participating in the Project Roomkey program.

“The proposed motel acquisition will enable the county to consolidate the motel rooms currently being leased from private parties at two different motel locations, and at a much lower cost per room/participant,” county staff reported.

Funding for the overall program will be split evenly between the city of West Sacramento and the county.

County staff said the program will serve as an important source of interim housing for homeless individuals, many of whom will eventually become tenants at an 87-unit permanent supportive housing project being constructed on West Capitol Avenue. The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday also voted to allocate \$450,000 in ARP funds to enable West Sacramento to extend its Downtown Streets Team program for three more years.

Since 2018, West Sacramento has contracted with the non-profit organization, which operates a unique work experience program for homeless and at-risk individuals in multiple cities in California.

“The goal of DST’s program model is to reduce homelessness by restoring dignity and preparing participants for employment,” noted county staff. “Under the program, homeless participants become part of a ‘team’ that carries out community beautification and maintenance activities in exchange for receiving case management (counseling and housing navigation services), employment assistance services, and financial rewards for basic needs in the form of rent stipends or gift cards.”

DST activities are conducted during daytime hours and include tasks like garbage pickup, graffiti removal, and assisting with the cleanup of homeless encampments. “DST is designed to operate within downtown districts to decrease the incidence of panhandling and other visible effects of homelessness while simultaneously improving those areas and providing unsheltered individuals a path to housing and employment stability,” said county staff.

In West Sacramento, DST activities have been focused on areas near the motels that have been used by Project Roomkey, in part to reduce the impacts of those homeless housing programs on the surrounding central business district.

A number of business owners in the city of Davis have expressed interest in bringing Downtown Streets Team to Davis as well and have urged the city to use ARP funds to do so.

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